

XXXVII.—Notes on *Sepia biserialis* and *Sepia elegans*.
By J. ALDER.*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,

In a paper communicated to the Linnæan Society, and published in the 3rd Part of their 'Proceedings,' Mr. Couch announces his having found ten specimens of the dorsal plate or bone of *Sepia biserialis* on the Cornish coast. On a careful perusal of his description, however, I am inclined to think that Mr. Couch has mistaken the species, and that the plates he found belong to *Sepia elegans*, Blainv., a species not before known to be British.

Sepia biserialis is a small species, the bone of which does not exceed $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, but 2 inches is the more general size. It tapers gradually to a point below, where it is much curved inwards (as may be seen in pl. P P P. fig. 2c of 'British Mollusca'), and has no spur, but only a slight keel or ridge at that extremity. *S. elegans* is considerably larger: its dorsal plate is usually $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long; it is more ovate in form than that of *S. biserialis* (though less so than in *S. officinalis*), and is distinguished by the very strong spur, which is a little compressed laterally, so as to form a slight ridge before and behind: the plate is not so much curved inwards below as in the former species. This agrees with the description of Mr. Couch. Professor Edward Forbes has suggested that these may be only different sexes of the same species; but this opinion, I suspect, was hazarded without having seen specimens, an inspection of which would, I think, have led to a different conclusion. Professor Verany has kindly sent me specimens of both kinds from the Mediterranean.

There can be little doubt that the Cuttle-fishes whose dorsal plates are cast up on our shores from time to time are indigenous. With respect to *S. biserialis*, its title to be considered British does not rest solely on the evidence of dorsal plates cast on shore, as the specimen from which the description and figures in the 'British Mollusca' were taken, was extracted by myself from the stomach of a cod at Cullerecoats, with the animal nearly entire, but too much decomposed for preservation.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours very truly,

JOSHUA ALDER.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, May 1857.